



Sayre Residents Describe Pain of Hospital Closure

OHA pushes for using federal health care funds to **makeOKbetter**



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OKLAHOMA CITY (March 24, 2016) – The Oklahoma Hospital Association (OHA) today unveiled a new video, “Losing Rural Hospitals,” as part of its **makeOKbetter** initiative to broaden health care coverage under Insure Oklahoma.

The video illustrates the impact a hospital closing has on a rural community. It features residents of Sayre, Oklahoma. Sayre Memorial Hospital shut its doors in February, costing the city jobs, sales tax revenue and local hospital care.

“It makes a tremendous difference if you have a stroke or heart attack to get somewhere very quickly,” said A.L. Whinery, retired Sayre businessman.

The closure of the hospital is also affecting the city’s image and economy. “I think we’re going to lose a lot of residents, a lot of people are going to move out,” said Francie Bauldridge, Sayre hair stylist and business owner. “You can’t have a viable community without a hospital.”

According to [iVantage Analytics](#), 42 of 76 rural hospitals in Oklahoma are at risk of closing.

“Sayre’s story is too close to becoming a reality for more than 40 other communities in Oklahoma,” said OHA president Craig Jones. “We must act now to take back federal funds to help sustain these rural hospitals and towns.”

With only two months left in the legislative session, OHA is calling on Oklahomans to contact their legislators and tell them to protect rural health care, communities and jobs by taking back federal dollars for Insure Oklahoma as a part of the state’s budget deal. Building on Insure Oklahoma would bring \$9.9 billion to Oklahoma and allow more than 230,000 Oklahomans to have medical insurance.

To learn more, visit makeokbetter.org. Follow the movement on Facebook at www.facebook.com/makeOKbetter or Twitter at twitter.com/makeOKbetter.

About the Oklahoma Hospital Association

Established in 1919, the Oklahoma Hospital Association represents more than 130 hospitals and

health care entities across the state of Oklahoma. OHA's primary objective is to promote the welfare of the public by leading and assisting its members in the provision of better health care and services for all people. Learn more at www.okoha.com.

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